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Review of the Swedish Exhibition

By THE EDITOR

THE general impression of the Swedish Exhibition, upon the western eye, was one of quiet charm. Its colors were, for the most part, rich, soft, often dull, and the masses of its landscapes serene or noble. The shadowy beauty of northern lands was expressed in a manner one had not anticipated, and strong sunlight upon snow did not hold so conspicuous a place as the works of northern men who dwell among us might have led one to expect.

The studies and scenes of peasant life were quaintly sincere, and some of the portraits amazingly clever. That of the late Prof. Carl Curman by Emil Österman was one of those prize pictures which make the awarding of a gold medal a matter of general satisfaction. Essentially an intellectual portrait, it presents

a fine type of thinker and scholar in an appropriate and understanding manner. The color, though restrained, is varied and interesting at every point, even in the dark tones of the clothes, which in most pictures of men are merely noncommittal.

Another able portrait, to be seen at this exhibition, was that of Rector Magnificus Henrik Schüh by Helmer Mas-Olle, a careful and conscientious study which we feel is true to type. A greenish light falls upon the face as though from the Rector's study lamp, and while it gives a peculiar tone to the flesh, it seems, nevertheless, a matter of faithful realism to thus present the man in his familiar surroundings.


While successful as a portrait, it is not nearly so delightful a picture as the Dalecar-

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lian Peasant, with its interesting range of greys suggesting a variety of warm color, and its dominant interest in the silvery hair of the picturesque old man. This is, indeed, a characteristic and beautiful thing of the type which has won fame for the artist.

Another portrait of superlative worth is that of an old man by Anna Silfakra Wrangel. Rich in tone and strong in character, it surely deserved the silver medal accorded it. An earthen jug or pot of a reddish tone in the old man's hands gave warmth to the deep bronze of the background, while from his eyes shone a timid and gentle soul that had suffered much, and learned to fear life. The face and figure were alive and real, but the picture was as remarkable for its beauty as its realism.

Most curiously humorous, and perhaps accidentally appropriate, is the study of the Fantasia by Axel Törneman. The extreme tendencies of the subject, and the post impressionistic manner of presenting them, are in most complete accord. Here is the eccentric enthusiast made the center of a decorative scheme, with a magpie upon his shoulder, and lilies of the valley in his hand, denoting perhaps a tendency to chatter, and a love of the beautiful. His eyes seem gazing into the mysteries of futurity, his lips about to utter sweeping and revolutionary statements, while color and treatment are all in fantastic harmony.

For studies of simple life we turn to Wilhelm Smith, whose *Fisherfolk* gives us all the expected wholesomeness of wind and sun and outdoor air. The ruddy faces of the fisherfolk, the silvery flashes of the netted fish, the blue of skies and sheen of sun, afford elements for a bright picture of the broad modern school.

Carl Larsson introduces us into the life of common people, simple, but snug, with the charm of comfortable circumstances. There is something naive and appealing about his frank enjoyment of the conveniences offered by good housewifery, in "*Summer Morning*," that would be amusing if it were not so unconscious and sincere. "*Esjör on Skis*" is evidently acquiring skill in the national sport in

the back yard of his home. His boyish absorption renders him more interesting than a champion among the wild hills and valleys, for that, we know, he is even now, in his fancy. The washing on the line gives a familiar home touch that is in keeping with the style of this artist.

How different in sentiment and treatment is Gabriel Strandberg's "The Cripple," a poor, sad wreck of humanity, one of the outcasts whom Brinton remarks as "Shambling Along in Melancholy Isolation." What tragedy and pathos there are in such studies of life. Devoid of any sentimental striving to reach our sympathies they shock and awaken pity. We can feel the shadow of vice, and yet we forgive it as perhaps the one refuge open to a philosopher with whom the world has dealt mercilessly. The curiously crude treatment of the landscape background seems to set this sad figure into stronger relief, emphasizing him as the message of the artist.

Zorn the Great is represented with only one picture, but even one Zorn is something of an exhibition in itself. His "Dalecarlian Girl in Winter Costume" is bright and beautiful in her gay peasant attire, with its lively touches of red setting off her rosy complexion and fair beauty. She is so strong and young and useful that she makes a simple life full of rough work seem the only wholesome, natural thing for womankind. She is presented with a faultless and marvelous realism that leaves no opportunity to imagine that art has gilded her humble life with ideal beauty. We feel, rather, that the artist has most faithfully given us a beauty which he has most minutely observed.

The grave study of an Italian by Olle Hjortzberg is a decorative bit full of the brooding calm that may threaten a storm. There is, however, a northern suggestion about this dark man, as though quite unwittingly the artist had wrought something of his own national temperament into the portrayal of an antipodal type.

Elsa Backlund-Celsing in "Tobogganing" divides our interest between a slender young woman in the enjoyment of a great winter sport and a fascinating beech forest white

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amid the snow. The forest itself is deserving of study, and to many more fascinating than the figure, the former possessing a something of suggestion and mystery, whereas the latter seems a plain and direct statement of visible fact.

Nothing in the Exhibition so enchanted one's fancy as the Fairy Tales of Ossian Elgström and Bauer. Immediately one went back to childhood when Alice in Wonderland and Hans Christian Andersen were one's dearest friends. Everything became possible, and every possibility, even the most terrifying, held its own delightful or deadly fascination. In "The Duel" by the former artist, herewith illustrated, one sees clearly the touch of the Asiatic "verging upon the Japanese" which Brinton remarks as being characteristic of Elgström. The two Bauers need no comment. Anyone who is not delighted thereby must never have been a child.

Among landscapes one could not overlook "Moonlight on a Mountain Lake" by Gustav A. Fjaestad, a lovely decorative effect in grey and brown, flatly painted. The moon, seen

only in the watery reflection, gives us a feeling of unreality as though the earth had been turned upside down, and one might, perhaps, sail over the clouds. "Summer Night Breeze," in somber browns that we do not ordinarily associate with summer in our own latitude, is, nevertheless, a pleasing picture. This treatment suggests a pointellist influence, and its composition is so well balanced as to render it agreeable in black and white reproduction.

"Sawmill in the Moonlight" by Gustaf Forssander appears much brighter in the reproduction than it seemed in the gallery. It was, in fact, very dark; all in a grey, greenish blue, with blackish shadows, flat and quiet and decorative. Hugo Carlberg was another artist whose colors seemed restrained to our eyes, for his "Spring Morning by the River" has none of that light and tender blue green and gold, which we associate with spring landscapes. Indeed, it is full of yellows, browns and blue greens, such as we expect in autumnal studies. Earth and sky are of the same tones, but there is a moist feeling about

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the scene, which has the flat and ornamental quality of a mural.

More like spring, as we know it, is "Swedish Summer Night" by Anshelm Schultzberg. The pink of its blossoming fruit tree, and the tender young vegetation of the garden beds beneath, become purplish in the northern twilight. The greens in the picture are all dull and soft, and the sky is pale with gold and turquoise. "Winter in the Forest Dalecarlia," by the same artist, is more the type of picture we associate with the northern temperament, so many of our own Swedish American painters essaying such scenes so delightfully. Here, however, the snow is all in a purple shadow, with dark contrasts of grey tree trunks, and a touch of rose shading to orange in the sky seen through the snow-laden boughs.

Otto Hesselbom's "In My Native Country" raises a paen of love and praise to the land of his birth. It is almost conventionalized as to drawing, the land and water masses inviting with the charm of a design. Flat, and purposely crude as to detail, it effectively emphasizes the beauty of the sweep of the landscape generally. The colors are dull, purplish greens, blues and browns in earth and trees, and orange in waters and sky.

Very different is the "Sacred Grove" by Gottfrid Kallstenius, a nice autumnal landscape full of forest browns and gold, with peeps of far-away blue sky. This is a fine realistic type of landscape, showing much appreciation for the beauty of lacy boughs and feathery foliage, and for the pleasing contrasts of light and shade. His "Moonlight Along the Coast" seemed an even finer picture, however, bringing to a climax the Swedish mastery of shadowy things.

A big little picture, best describes "Fishing Fleet at Anchor," by Anna Boberg. It is broadly handled, the colors seeming to have been squeezed on out of the tubes, but it is full of the majesty of tall cliffs, and the ripple and reflection of placid waters, while the color is restrained to a refined tonality.

A gold medal picture which we do not illustrate was Wilhelm Rönninge Behm's "Winter Evening," a simple well done study of

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level fields and red barns under a peaceful evening sky. Helmar Sollefteå Osslund was another gold medal winner.

"Sea Eagles," by Bruno A. Liljefors, was wild and savage and lonely, replete with good color and vitality. It made one feel the ferocity of Nature, "red with tooth and claw," in its deep cold blue sea, its forbidding ragged rocks and its cruel and powerful birds of prey, about to feast upon a wild duck, with as small concern for the relationship of winged creatures as is shown between humans and their fellow mammals.

The Exhibition was, indeed, full of fine things, too numerous for illustration here, and reflected great credit, not only on Sweden and her artists, but upon those who have assembled it for presentation in the galleries of the United States. Before it is dispersed it will have been seen at: The Brooklyn Museum, The Copley Society of Boston, The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, The Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, The Detroit

Museum of Art, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The City Art Museum, St. Louis, The John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis, and The Toledo Museum of Art, as well as at the Art Institute.

It has been well attended in Chicago, despite the quiet of all art interest during the summer months, and it will doubtless be enthusiastically received and much enjoyed throughout the country.

Local Art on the New Municipal Pier

THE new Municipal Pier is to serve a purpose unthought of by those who originally planned it, for, through the activities of Victor Higgins, Secretary of the Commission for the Encouragement of Local Art, the Commission's entire collection of paintings has been placed about the walls of the large waiting room at the far end of the pier.

It is an illuminating spectacle, too, for it brings forcibly before one the extent of the



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Commission's achievements since its creation during the regime of Carter H. Harrison. With \$5,000 a year to spend, more could hardly have been accomplished from the standpoint of excellence and quality. Many prize winners from recent exhibitions are to be seen in the collection, and altogether it is broadly representative of much of the best of our local art.

Those who may have thought that the Chicago public is indifferent to art, should go out to the pier and observe the passing crowds ever intent upon the pictures. All day long there are men, women and children standing before these canvases, studying them thoughtfully with evident enjoyment. The pictures certainly cheer up the grey plastered walls and give warmth, life and color to the vast interior. The arrangement of screens of muslin with borders in green and cream stripe, and of formal clipped box trees in terrace hedge effect, gives a most enhancing setting for these works of art and deserves a word of commendation. Apparently so simple, this arrangement is nevertheless most carefully thought out and in the perfection of quiet good taste.

That the exhibition has met with popular interest is proved by the following letter which recently appeared in the Daily News and which shows that our foreign born citizens are interested in improving the pier with art works. The letter runs:

"I was out on the new pier the other day to see the art exhibition and while there conceived an idea, which I here offer.

"Several months ago I saw a very fine piece of sculpture at the Art Institute, 'The Greek Dancer,' by Emil Zettler. And at that time we Greeks talked of having it cast in bronze for the purpose of presenting it to the king and queen of Greece. However, the war scare put a stop to that and nothing more was done about it.

"Would not 'The Greek Dancer' make an extra fine decoration for the new pier? And, would it not be an extra fine idea for the Chicago Art Commission and us Greek citizens to get together and buy it for that purpose, each paying one half of the cost?



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"In my little way I have always taken a deep interest in art in all its branches and I think I know a little about it. And I am of the opinion that Mr. Zettler's 'The Greek Dancer' is the finest piece of modern sculpture that I have had the pleasure of seeing. He seems to have absorbed the very spirit of his subject. The figure stands out, alive and throbbing. To my mind, he has perfectly portrayed the serious Greek dancer, not the kind we occasionally see in vaudeville and musical comedy. And am I wrong in saying that the expressing of the real deep feeling of the subject is far more important than anything else, modeling and all?"

"I would like to propose that the city art commission arrange to pay one-half for the statue and the Greek citizens of Chicago pay the other half and then, after having it cast in bronze alone, or surmounting a beautiful fountain, present it to the city for the new pier, or, if not there, for one of the parks.

(Signed) "NICK PAPPAS."

There is something touching about this appeal, and one cannot but hope that it will not go unconsidered.

The pier should indeed offer every kind of restful and improving environment. As it stands, it is a most magnificent work of civilization, affording an opportunity for the study and enjoyment of some of nature's finest gifts, a great body of sparkling water and a great abundance of fresh air. It is nobly planned and built, and should therefore be graciously adorned. There is much room here for the display and encouragement of our local art. It might well prove a supplementary museum radiating an influence only second to that of the Art Institute.

As to the pier itself, while it is not the special province of an art publication to deal in mechanical and structural data concerning building operations in general, this feat is so stupendous that some description and a few statistics are well considered here.

For the latter, we have found none better

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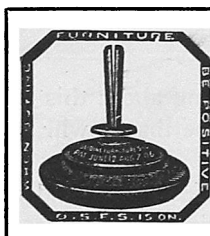
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summarized and compiled than those given in an article by Lyle Harper, which recently appeared in Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett's house organ. We therefore take the liberty of quoting them in their entirety:

"The completion of this wonderful pier at the foot of East Grand and Illinois street, just north of the mouth of Chicago River in Chicago's 'outer harbor, district No. 1,' is the first great step in a progressive policy of harbor development, that will not only restore Chicago's prestige as the chief terminal for water traffic on the upper lakes, but will ultimately fulfill its manifest destiny as the greatest inland seaport in the world.

"This new pier, constructed at a cost of \$4,500,000, rests on a foundation costing \$1,-

500,000 of the total. Some idea of the magnitude of the sub-structure and foundation may be gained from the following facts: That 20,000 long timber pilings were driven and 1,500,000 cubic yards of sand and clay filling and 50,000 cubic yards of heavily reinforced concrete, were placed, not mentioning the immense heavy timbers and iron. Only those who watched the daily progress of this foundation work can realize the hardships encountered by the constructors as they were being compelled continually to seek shelter from the rough open lake.

"The total length of the pier is 3,000 feet, nearly three-fifths of a mile, allowing a dockage of 8,500 feet. It is 292 feet wide."